



PRESS RELEASE

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Recreation joins Conservation to create new educational facility *Mayor Sheila Dixon to announce newly formed Rec and Parks/ Audubon Partnership*

BALTIMORE (Sept. 5, 2007)— Mayor Sheila Dixon joined representatives from the National Audubon Society, the Friends of Patterson Park, Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks and feathered friends from the Carrie Murray Nature Center to unveil the new Patterson Park Audubon at Virginia S. Baker Recreation Center concept: *Baltimore's innovative approach to providing educational programming through environmental conservation and recreational activities.*

"We are very excited about the extended partnership agreement between the City of Baltimore and the National Audubon Society, which will result in the creation of a new educational facility in Southeast Baltimore," said Mayor Sheila Dixon. "Our combined efforts will serve thousands of area children and adults with a wide variety of nature, environmental conservation and recreational programs," she added.

The Virginia S. Baker/Patterson Park Recreation Center will undergo a \$3.5 million renovation, using state-of-the-art green technologies to add a second-story annex to the existing center. This annex, which will house the Patterson Park Audubon, will include "greening" the structure by converting the building to a geothermal heating and cooling system, creating a green roof, and other environmental friendly changes. The Patterson Park Audubon at Virginia S. Baker Recreation Center will serve as an educational resource for the surrounding park communities of Patterson Park, Highlandtown, Canton, Hampstead Hill, South-Ellwood, Upper Fells Point, and Butchers Hill as well as school, church and nonprofit groups.

"Audubon and the Department of Recreation and Parks are already changing lives at Patterson Park by connecting children and families with the natural wonders that surround and sustain them and by inspiring

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commitment to help safeguard the environment we share,” said Audubon President John Flicker. “This landmark project will take that success to new levels. The strength of our existing program here, along with the leadership of the City government and the Friends of Patterson Park in reinvigorating this extraordinary urban green space, makes it an easy decision to expand Audubon's ties to the deserving residents of Baltimore.”

Baltimore’s park woodlands protect 30 miles of streams and provide homes for countless species of local wildlife and migratory bird populations. Through the Department of Recreation and Parks’ Office of Parks Conservation and Community Outreach, the city coordinates tree planting, environmental enhancement and restoration projects in Baltimore’s parks through the Community Forestry, Urban Weed Warrior and Neighborhood Tree Steward programs.

“Our partnership with the National Audubon Society is a natural fit because it gives us an opportunity to expand our existing programming at the Virginia S. Baker Recreation Center, which has been serving community youth for over 30 years,” said Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks’ Director Connie A. Brown. “Part of our [Recreation and Parks] ongoing mission is to guide in the preservation of open green space and the surrounding natural resources, which are important to improving the quality of life for the citizens of Baltimore.”

Audubon, the Friends of Patterson Park and the Department of Recreation and Parks will be conducting surveys and community meetings this fall to solicit community input to refine the draft program and building design plans. The construction costs for the new center will be funded through the City of Baltimore and Audubon will be challenged to raise an endowment to fund on-going operating expenses. The Audubon space will be approximately 4,000 square feet.

For more information on the new Patterson Park Audubon at Virginia S. Baker Recreation Center concept, please call Recreation and Parks at (410) 396-6694 or the Patterson Park Audubon Center at (410) 558-BIRD.

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